

# **A Critical Analysis On Teachers' Perception On Uteiage And Schooling To Learners With Special Educational Needs In Inclusive Institutes In Kenya.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Specific goal of adopting inclusion in education policy is to show regard to pupilstars with impairment in order to compete at an equitable measure in each and every educational activity just as their fellow mates who suffer no special needs. Learners with special needs ought to be given equal opportunities like their peers in education set up without any form of favoritism, discrimination, labeling, segregation and isolation. This article seeks to critically analyze the education policy in mainstream or even regular schools. Though majority of the teachers would prefer it adopted, there is a need for changing the stakeholders' attitudes in order to dispense aid for learners with disabilities. Majority of the Kenyan teachers require to be enlightened on the usefulness of inclusion thus the need for creating awareness on inclusive education. Teachers require more training on how to offer tutorage to learners with special needs as they possess no or in adequate knowledge on SNE. More learning institutions of higher learning should be put in place to offer skills on SNE so as to take inboard the children with special needs. The Kenyan government too ought to be out to fund institutions of higher learning so as to produce more specialists as a way of supporting teachers, providing specialized teaching and learning resources like braille and hearing aids and also setting the right infrastructure in our Kenyan schools. Although most of the teachers felt that mainstreaming was key and relevant; would accommodate learners with disabilities in their classes, a few were uncomfortable with the policy of inclusion depending on the form and severity of disability and what is expected from the teacher by the other stake holders.

**KEY WORDS:** teachers' perception, inclusive education (IE), special needs education (SNE), learners with special needs, special needs (SN), inclusion, main streaming, multi-disciplinary teams(MDT), tutelage, schooling.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In Kenya, the policy of inclusion has been widely debated upon and given fore front attention in education sector. As the teachers are the key deliverers of education policies, this article seeks to critically analyze so as to get to know the teachers' perception including their view points on inclusion. The opinion of the few teachers who are not for inclusive education is that the decision makers were only in place to come up with policies on inclusion but at the same time were out of touch with realities in an inclusive set up or in the classrooms. Teachers came up with elements influencing the conquest encompass large number of learners, poor educational materials and the fact that teachers are not properly equipped for this great task of inclusion.

To achieve the objectives of inclusive policy in schools in Kenya, teachers should have proper

communication amongst themselves and also with the decision makers. They should also use the appropriate cooperative learning grouping so as to accommodate learners with special needs.

Teachers should be ready to change their negative attitudes toward learners with special needs and should go an extra mile in order to deal with them by going for further studies or even a refresher course on inclusion. They should know and put in to practice the reality that education delivery should be equal; all learners should enjoy equal access to learning resources. Socialization opportunities should be equitably distributed in our schools for both abled and disabled children as this should be availed in an inclusive set up.

## **2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

According to Agbenyega(2006), majority of the school teachers who depict that they are not ready and are afraid of working with children with special needs' project frustration, infuriation and abnegation towards inclusive education as they believe that it can result to degrading intellectual performance.(Gary, 1997; Tieger Farber, 1998) stated that the confidence of teachers is more so affected by accessibility to educational resources and specialist support as proved by Bennet,(1997) and Katzenmeyer,(1997). A number of the teachers' perception on inclusive education is that some learners with impairments ought to be taught in regular school based special units or in special schools far from their peers who do not have any special needs.

Teachers perceive learners with special needs as a 'let down' as they limit the amount of teaching load to be delivered as amounting to not completing the syllabus. They believe that the skills and the knowledge that they have is limited to be in a position to reach learners with SNE effectively. The teachers also fear that their schools would not excel academically if they incorporate children with special needs in their classes as they suffer deficiency of expertise in handling them in class. Therefore this article seeks to critically analyze the teachers' perception on pedagogy of children with SN in an inclusive set up in Kenya.

## **3.0 PRETENSIONS OF THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

This article is directed by the preceding pretensions:

1. To find out the perception of teachers towards pupilstars with SN involved in inclusion policy.
2. To scrutinize the beliefs and attitudes of educators upon adoption of inclusion policy in education in Kenya.
3. To analyze the intervention measures required in place to boost teachers' perception on children with special needs.
4. To examine the challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusion in education.
5. To analyze the role of variables related to a positive perception of teachers towards learners in inclusion with SN.

## **5.0 THE ANALYSIS PURPOSE**

The aim of this article is to analyze teachers' perception on tutelage and schooling to learners having SN in an inclusive set up in Kenya. The recommendations of this article will benefit the education stake holders like teachers, government and learners with special needs in an inclusive set up.

## 6.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The findings of this critical analysis article will be of importance to various stake holders in the sector of education such as:

- Government of Kenya  
The findings would be useful to the government of Kenya in forming education policies pertaining success of inclusion policy especially in changing the perception teachers on children with special needs. It will also facilitate for the provision of teaching and learning resources of teachers about basics of education for learners with disabilities.
- Teachers  
The findings of this article would expose the teachers' perception on teaching and learning of learners with SN in an inclusive program. It will also address the challenges and fears of teachers pertaining the issue of inclusion. It will also provide for intervention measures to be put in place to impact positivity on teachers' attitudes and beliefs on learners with special needs in an inclusive set up.

## 7.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 7.1 Introduction

This portion of the article reviews the related existing literature on teachers' perception on Tutelage and schooling to learners with SN in an inclusive set up in Kenya presented by various researchers, scholars and authors. The literature is obtained from institutional, regional and national studies.

### 7.2 PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON LEARNERS WITH SN

Perception possessed by tutors upon learners with SN in inclusion education set up is diverse. One feature of inclusive education is willingness of teachers to accept learners with SN. Indicators of teachers' willingness revolve on their attitudes and knowledge. Teachers admit that inclusive education promotes social interaction hence minimizing negative stereotyping and labeling on such learners. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) unraveled that teachers are extra supportive at both individual and at school level when it comes to inclusion policy. They strongly believe in its teaching effectiveness to both able and learners with SN. As regards to the support they receive, only 18.6% admitted that they were accorded enough time for involving learners with SN while another 22.3% admitted that they were properly trained in SNE.

Carroll (2003) carried out an investigation on the negative teacher perception towards inclusion in Australia. He realized that the preparation programs for teachers were insufficient in equipping them to work with SN learners. In return when teachers come across learners with SN they become uncomfortable, are afraid, uncertain and vulnerable and are unable to adopt. (Gickling and et al,1975) noted that educators may strive against inclusion policy on the basis of in appropriate competence. It appears the tutors perceive themselves as not ready for the policy due to lack of the appropriate training on inclusion. This also may lower the confidence of educators as they adopt the policy and in including learners with SN in classes. This may result from inadequate proficiency in modifying the curriculum to fit learners with individualized

learning needs(Singafos and Elkins, 1994).

### **7.3 ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF TEACHERS ON ADAPTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY**

The teachers' attitude and beliefs are fundamental element in developing inclusive education policy and its adoption. Educating and training teachers is important in promoting positive attitudes and beliefs that strive to promote the policy. Inclusive education has been a target in most countries following Salamanca statement which supports the need to provide equitable education. Advocacy for inclusive education to favorable acceptance of the education inclusion policy by the educators policy is not enough but the educators and attitudes and expectations which are a determinant on whether inclusion will be successful or not. (UNESCO.THE SALAMANCA STATEMENT: UNESCO, 1994).

Teachers' perception are based on how the policy can be implemented, this includes how to incorporate learners with SN without disadvantaging other learners, concerns on the other quality and quantity of learners with SN , availability of support services and adequate training and competence.

Another thing that affects teachers altitudes and beliefs are large classes, are deemed to be a barrier to the successful adoption of inclusion policy. Large classes pose a challenge and added demands to teachers while putting into consideration that learners are attended to and ought to receive proper time.(Agran, Alper and wehmeyer,2002; Pronchnow Kearney and carroll, 2000; Von Reusen et al, 2001).

### **7.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSION IN EDUCATION**

Kenyan government according to Education Ministry draft report [2008] on special education has progressed by providing educational support to people with SN.

However, the teachers are not given the actual date of intervention for the children with SN. They also lack a comprehensive education policy on SN and these are no proper set guidelines special needs education at all levels Educators also lack required instruments and expertise for screening and judging beforehand the infrastructure and equipment are not adequate and appropriate while teaching and learning facilities and skills are inadequate.

Angrist and lavy [2001] observed that inappropriate and inadequate training of tutors leads to poor learners' tests score. This is to mean that including all calibre of pupilstars in inhibits inclusive education if the teachers are not trained adequately. This is reflected on learners' performance as it affects the understanding of some learners.

Teachers are expected in Kenya to shine in the end of the course exam through the learners due to the fear of being beaten in such national exams which according to Surgiots[2008] do not capture learners' diverse back grounds and needs teachers have the challenge of meeting individual needs in an inclusive class.

### **7.5 INTERVENTIONS NEEDED IN PLACE TO IMPROVE ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

A draft report [2008] noted that in order to address the challenges facing inclusive education; teachers included some of the mitigation measures include; efficacious early identification and intervention plans guided by MDT of experts, appropriate screening on the type of SN and

consultancy (Mwaura, 2009) made the recommendations below; policy guidelines on SNE/IE to be developed, MDT to be vigilant and adopt IE philosophy and to encourage learners with SN to be included in the mainstream schools, put into consideration the training and in servicing of teachers so that they can support SNE.

It has been noted by certain agencies that inclusion policy largely depended on teachers attitudes towards learners

with SN, their ability to promote social relations, their opinion on distinctness of each class and their inclination to handle the peculiarity successfully, Educators require a set of skills, know how, pedagogical approaches, adequate resources and time to face the alterations effectually. The educators need support from the other education stakeholders in order to stay focused on inclusion.

### **7.5 ROLES OF VARIABLES RELATED TO A POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS TOWARD CHILDREN WITH SN IN INCLUSIVE SET UP.**

Research about educators' attitude on children with SN in education inclusion shows that: the attitudes are influenced by variables such as experience of teachers in SNE, the training they have, perception of the available resources and the support team in place. If the teacher has been in the field of SNE for a longer period, the teacher possesses optimistic perception in regard to learners with SN in a regular school class. Giangreco (1993) found out that in a class with adverse SN cases, the teachers' initial resistant attitude changed over time to a more favorable attitude. Teacher training affects the growth of attitudes towards SN learners especially on a specific area of specialization and professional capability

Teachers' perception on the availability of learning resources such as teachers being equipped with relevant skills and support from other stakeholders, experts and practitioners' collaboration is very key. Clear practical and theoretical frameworks are necessary for teachers. Simpson et al (2003) noted that availability and collaboration of support staff include: SNE teachers to a teacher preparing to teach and more so teaching learners with autistic syndrome disorder becomes favorable.

### **8.0 Research methodology**

Researchers in this study adopted a qualitative exploratory methodology approach established on an analytical systematic plan. The design plan has been used to blend systematic analysis as positive evaluation of a teachers' perception on learners with SN in an inclusive set up but also providing recommendations to stake holders in education sector. The perception challenges to SN learners. The analysis seeks justification of teachers training, provision of educational pedagogical materials are supplied in educational institutions in addition to interventions to be put in place in order to change teachers' negative perception on children with SN. The study targeted all teachers in Kenya.

### **9.0 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the researchers came up with the following conclusions: children with special needs are present within regular classes based in Kenyan schools. Schools had learning resources in addition to the appropriate services though not adequate for the adoption of inclusive education. Lack of finances and material support for creating awareness and advocacy

for requisites of pupilstars with disabilities, informal approach accorded to guidance and counseling in addressing their unique requisites of disabled learners, deficient upgraded learning and school environment to cater for learners' diverse needs, availability of few special units connected to mainstream schools on top of missing upgraded infrastructure in schools is an indication of the pathetic state of affairs in successful implementation of inclusive education policy in Kenya.

Teachers and other education stake holders had a positive perception towards children with SN although they strongly felt that the individual needs of the learners could best be addressed in special schools. There are challenges that have continued to hinder implementation of inclusive education in Kenyan schools which include: inadequate trained personnel in SNE, lacking appropriate pedagogical materials, negative perception from the community towards children with special needs, infrastructure in schools that are not upgraded to suit all learners especially the physically challenged, lack of proper remuneration and motivation an un informed cultural reasons that regard such children as bad omen to the society. The interventions to be put in place to curb the challenges facing inclusion are three fold: at school level, at community level and government or policy formulation.

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